

## A Multi-Tiered Approach to Reducing Chronic Absence in Elementary School

### Purpose

This facilitator's guide was prepared to help you and your school and district colleagues optimize use of the video, *Every Student, Every Day: A Multi-Tiered Approach to Reducing Chronic Absence in Elementary School*, and the list of helpful links about multi-tiered attendance interventions. The discussion questions, tips, and other information can help facilitators engage colleagues to gain a better understanding of what a multi-tiered approach to improving attendance looks like in the elementary grades and begin a process to strengthen local interventions.

### Video Overview

This video highlights how schools and districts can use data to define their attendance challenges, better understand the reasons why students are chronically absent, and design and carry out a multi-tiered approach to reduce chronic absence, ranging from community awareness and prevention to intensive, individualized support for students and families.

### Audience

The target audience for this video and follow-up discussions includes district office staff (e.g., superintendents, student services directors, child welfare attendance coordinators/directors), principals, teachers, state education agency or regional School Attendance Review Board (SARB) members, and staff from partnering community-based organizations.

**Tip: To organize your school and district for providing tiered supports, all planning discussions should involve key staff who deliver the interventions at each tier. Coordination across the tiers is critical for encouraging daily attendance and addressing the root causes of chronic absence.**

### Materials

- The video *Every Student, Every Day: A Multi-Tiered Approach to Reducing Chronic Absence in Elementary School* is available at <https://youtu.be/4gAk2mKBrqA>
- A list of helpful links for developing your multi-tiered attendance interventions can be found at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Publications/Details/266>.

### Time

The video is about 7 minutes long. At the end of each clip described below, it is suggested that the facilitator pause the video for discussion of the clip. The following is an outline of the video's content:

- 0:00 to 2:22: Defines chronic absence, describes its prevalence and effects, and emphasizes the importance of using data to identify students who are chronically absent in order to provide appropriate supports.

- 2:23 to 5:28: Defines the multi-tiered approach and provides examples of Tier 1 prevention activities.
- 5:29 to 6:10: Defines and provides examples of Tier 2 early interventions.
- 6:11 to 6:50: Defines and provides examples of Tier 3 intensive, individualized interventions.

**Tip: It is recommended that the participants watch the video in full before reviewing short segments for discussion.**

## Discussion Guide

---

This list of discussion questions helps a team move through an inquiry process, from understanding who the chronically absent students are and why they might be missing school to identifying tiered interventions to fill gaps. The questions can be shaped into an agenda for a formal training session or planning meeting, or they can serve as a set of less structured discussion prompts. Having access to local attendance data and some of the additional resources linked to in the Materials section might be helpful in this conversation.

1. What do we know from data about the chronic absence rates in our school and district?
  - a. How many students are chronically absent?
  - b. Are there more chronically absent students in specific grade levels?
  - c. Are there other patterns in chronic absence rates such as more students being absent at particular schools or in a specific student group?
  - d. Does looking at attendance and chronic absence data change any assumptions we held about who was missing a lot of school?
2. Why are students chronically absent in our school and district? What data can we use to better understand the reasons for absenteeism?
3. The video shows examples of multi-tiered attendance interventions—what tiered supports are currently in place in our school and district?
  - a. Are these interventions carried out consistently districtwide?
  - b. Is there a school or classroom where a particular support is getting good results that we might try to replicate elsewhere?
4. After viewing the video, what are some new ideas for tiered attendance supports to fill gaps or to strengthen existing supports?
5. Are there other school and district multi-tiered approaches that we can leverage to address attendance (e.g., Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Response to Intervention, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support)?
6. What improvements to our multi-tiered supports do we want to make?
  - a. What do we want to tackle first?
  - b. Where might we look for more information?
  - c. Who will lead this effort?
  - d. What is the timeline?

**Tip: If discussion time is short, the facilitator may wish to prepare answers to some of the questions in advance. For example, data showing the number of chronically absent students by school and grade level or a starter list of tiered interventions for the group to add to could be provided.**